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MAKING OUR HOMES ATTRACTIVE, INSIDE AND OUT, WITH LITTLE MONEY

A radio talk by Joyce Cotton, 4-H club member, Madison County, Kentucky, delivered in the National 4-H club radio program, August 1, 1936, and broadcast by a network of 55 associate NBC radio stations.

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Our house, a big, old, white frame, in Madison County, Kentucky, stands somewhat back from the highway in a large lawn shaded by maples, pines and cedars. We think our home presents a good example of what can be done inside and out with little cost. From the 4-H club meetings which I attend and the homemakers' club meetings which my mother attends, we have learned, how to use to advantage what we have. The change in our lawn that helped most was the addition of flowers and shrubs. Borders made of plants we grew from seed proved to be the most interesting arrangement of flowers in our planting. The shrubs we added were inexpensive but effective and the varieties include forsythia, spirea, japonica and barberry.

Inside we have made a number of improvements which gave us a more livable and attractive home. When we decided to rearrange the rooms, we realized that we need furniture for our living rooms, but my father said, "no money". So, insitead of going to town to buy, I went to the attic to hunt. There I found an old love seat, four chairs and a table which, the very dilapidated, seemed to have possibilities. They all needed reconditioning and refinishing and here the home demonstration agent enters the picture. Thru her, we learned how. The finished seat and chairs replaced an old leather divan and two ugly chairs. Two other refinished and reseatd antique rockers and a third, made attractive with a slip cover, were included in our living room furnishings.

We also had an old clock which had been varnished so many times that it was impossible to see the wood. Refinished, we found it was rosewood. This was the very thing to adorn the mantel of our living room. Pictures in old fashioned frames were hung on each side of the clock and, to complete the grouping, bowls of ivy were placed on the mantel directly beneath the pictures. In our rearranged living room, we changed the center of interest from a table in the center to this very lovely old fire place.

While my mother and I were working on the living room, I was using my bed room as a 4-H room improvement project. My furniture included a tall wooden bed, a dresser, a small table, and two chairs. The floor covering was a linoleum rug. The walls had recently been papered and were in good condition. First, I cleaned the floor. I applied ground color, then light oak varnish and waxed the surface. Finally, I substituted for the old linoleum some lovely braided rag rugs that I made myself. I used cream enamel on the wood work and the furniture. To transform the awkward old bed, I sawed off the head board, leaving it about one foot high, and the foot board even with the mattress. I covered it with a spread of unbleached muslin and rose gingham.

I wanted a desk very much, but since I could not afford one, I made mine from an old wash stand that was also found in the attic. By removing the doors and the rack at the top and painting it to match the other furniture,

(over)

I had a desk. My dresser was changed into a chest by removing the mirror, but I still needed a dressing table. I had heard of dressing tables made of orange crates, but I hadn't the slightest idea how to do it. However, I secured two orange crates from our grocer and, with the help of our local 4-H club leader, I cleaned and enameled them. My next problem was a top for the crates. In my father's work shop, I found an old desk top that was just the thing. This I enameled and fastened to the orange crates which were placed on end. Curtains were made of unbleached muslin and rose gingham and an old broken mirror was re-cut to the right size and shape to complete my dressing table.

I made an easy chair from a discarded single automobile seat. It was put on a box, padded and covered with the same unbleached muslin and rose gingham. My dressing table stool and a foot stool were made from boxes which were put on legs, padded and covered. A vinegar bottle which I painted by pouring rose enamel inside formed the base of one of my lamps. With this, I used a rose gingham shade. My curtains were made of unbleached muslin with the gingham ruffles. I made fitted boxes and partitions for the drawers of the chest from paste board and covered them with wall paper.

All the while I was working on my room, my father was saying it was nonsense and that I was doing a lot of work for no gain. However, when the room was finished, he was quite proud of my accomplishment. He calls it "The something-for-nothing" room.

When my mother decided to remodel our kitchen, my father helped with the work. We enlarged the cabinet space and rearranged our equipment and furniture to save time, energy and steps. We enameled the dark oak walls cream. Color was added by enameling the cabinets yellow and the movable furniture to form a breakfast unit. The floor was covered with blue and cream checked inlaid linoleum.

In all that we have done at home, both inside and out, we have held to standards of economy, convenience, comfort and attractiveness. We have, I think, an attractive home and still we have spent very little money.

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